



City of Seattle
Human Services Department

MEMORANDUM

Date: September 23, 2011

To: Councilmember Nick Licata, Chair
Housing, Human Services, Health and Culture Committee

From: Dannette R. Smith, Director, Human Services Department
Marie Kurose, Strategic Advisor, Human Services Department

CC: Darryl Smith, Deputy Mayor of Community
Julie Nelson, Director, Office of Civil Rights

Subject: Seattle Human Service Department's report on 2011 Race and Social Justice Initiative Work Plan

I am looking forward to sharing the Human Services Department's Race and Social Justice Work Plan with the Housing, Human Services, Health and Culture Committee on September 28, 2011. This report will highlight examples of how racial equity and social justice are being integrated into the Human Service Department's Strategic Planning and organizational changes.

As we begin to implement our Strategic Plan—which includes many race and social justice principles—we have become less focused on trainings and meetings and more on applying RSJ to our everyday work; giving considerable thought and attention to how we do this in a meaningful and lasting way. This includes using a race and social justice “lens” in making budget decisions, but also embedding RSJ in the development of some of our major programs and initiatives.

A few examples:

- Community Engagement - as part of the development of the Strategic Plan, we have held nearly 40 meetings with diverse stakeholders. This is just the beginning of our ongoing dialogue and partnership with the community to seek their expertise in developing priorities, strategies and programs that are relevant, and build on the informal supports and strengths within their communities.
- Refugee and Immigrant Youth Initiative - family-based approach to job readiness training for immigrant and refugee youth coordinated with support for parents.
- Communities Supporting Safe & Stable Housing - this initiative will help guide investments in shelter, transitional housing, hygiene centers and other programs for homeless individuals and families includes intentional inclusion of communities of color, immigrants and refugees.
- Data Collection - we intend to collect and analyze data in order to find and understand disparities in needs and services to our clients.
- Utilize HSD's Change Team to provide leadership in institutionalizing an RSJ approach in our everyday work.